

Customer No.: 31561
Application No.: 10/709,953
Docket No.: 10546-US-PA

REMARKS

Present Status of the Application

It is noted with great appreciation that the Office Action considers claims 9-10, 17-18 as allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In response thereto, Applicants have amended claims 1, 18-19, cancelled claims 16-17 and added new claims 21-22, without disclaimer, prejudice or waiver.

More specifically, claim 16-17 have been cancelled and independent claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claims 16-17 which the Examiner considered as allowable subject matter. Additionally, claim 18, which the Examiner considered as allowable subject matter, has been rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim 1 and the intervening claims 16. Applicants have amended the aforementioned claims merely to reduce the number of disputed issues and facilitate early allowance and issuance of other claims in the present application. Applicants reserve the right to pursue the subject matter of the original claims in a continuing application.

Further, Applicants have added claims 21-22, which are written in dependent form so as to further limit the claimed subject matter in the allowable independent claim 18. Therefore, it is submitted that claims 21-22 are also in condition for allowance for the above reasons.

Previously, Applicants were required under 35 U.S.C. 121 to select a single disclosed species among the species in Figures 2-9 for prosecution. Applicants had elected Figure 2, directing to the generic claim 1 and claims 2-3, 8-12 and 16-20. Since the generic claim 1 is now allowable, Applicants are also entitled to the consideration of claims to additional species which

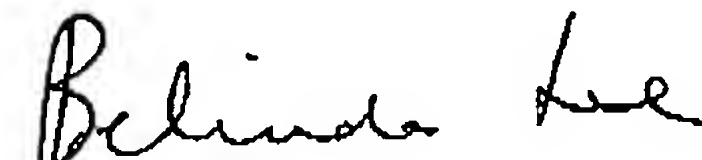
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are written in dependent form or otherwise include all the limitations of the allowed/allowable generic claim as provided by 37 CFR 1.141. Accordingly, the consideration for the allowance of claims 4-7, 13-15 is hereby respectfully requested.

Upon entry of the amendments in this response, claims 1-15 and 18-22 remain pending in the present application. In light of the foregoing amendments and for at least the reasons set forth hereinbefore, Applicants respectfully submit that all objections and/or rejections have been traversed, rendered moot, and/or accommodated, and that the now pending claims 1-15, 18-22 are in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and allowance of the present application and all pending claims are hereby courteously requested. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephonic conference would expedite the examination of this matter, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned.

Date: Dec. 29, 2006

Respectfully submitted,


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